Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 11072 171819Z

50
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 SAB-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01

ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /152 W
---------- 021156
R 171521Z JUL 74
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 896
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11072

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UR, XF
SUBJ: SOVIET ARABISTS' VIEWS ON ME

1. SUMMARY. SOVIET MIDDLE EAST SPECIALISTS, IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY, STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF GENEVA MEPC BUT ARE NOT PERTURBED ABOUT ITS NOT BEING CONVENED UNTIL SEPTEMBER AT EARLIEST. SOME PIQUE CONTINUES TO BE DISPLAYED ABOUT SOVIETS' SIDELINE ROLE IN DISENGAGEMENT. SOVIETS DISCOUNT EARLY RE-SUMPTION OF SOVIET-ISRAELI DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. THEY CLAIM ARAFAT VISIT TO MOSCOW THIS SUMMER WILL BE UNOFFICIAL AND THAT NO OFFICIAL PLO REPRESENTATION
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 11072 171819Z

WILL BE ESTABLISHED HERE. THEY TAKE COOL AND RELAXED

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

VIEW OF SOVIET-INITIATED POSTPONEMENT OF FAHMY VISIT,
SAYING THEY HAVE NOTHING TO DISCUSS WITH HIM UNTIL
AFTER THE ARAB SUMMIT IN SEPTEMBER. END SUMMARY.

2.AT JULY 12 RECEPTION FOR VISITING U.S. DELEGATION,
LEADING SOVIET ARABIST IGOR BELYAYEV OFFERED EMBOFFS
HIS VIEWS ON PRESNET ME SITUATION AND U.S.- SOVIET IN-
VOLVEMENT IN THE AREA. ALSO PRESENT WAS USA INSIT-
TUTE ME SPECIALIST K. KISLOV. AT EGYPTIAN SOCIAL
FUNCTION SAME EVENING, DEPUTY CHIEF MFA NEAR EAST
DIVISION PYRLIN ALSO COMMENTED ON ME QUESTIONS.

3. PROSPECTS FOR ME SETTLEMENT. BELYAYEV - A
FORMER PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT IN CAIRO AND A FREQUENT PRESS
COMMENTATOR ON ME -- TOOK A POSITIVE BUT LONG-TERM
VIEW OF THE GENERAL OUTLOOK FOR SETTLEMENT OF THE
RAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM. HE THOUGHT DISENGATEMENT
REPRESNETED SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS WHICH HE WOULD NOT
HAVE THOUGHT POSSIBLE LAST FALL. BUT DISENGAGEMENT
WAS ONLY A FIRST STEP. NEGOTIATING A POLITICAL
SETTLEMENT WILL BE DIFFICULT AND WILL TAKE
CONSIDERABLE TIME, POSSIBLY THREE TO FIVE YEARS.
THE IMPORTANT THING NOW, HOWEVER, IS TO GET GENEVA
GOING AND BEGIN CONSIDERATION OF THE ELEMENTS OF A
POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

4. U.S. ME ROLE. BELYAYEV EXHIBITED CONCERN AND SOME
BITTERNESS ABOUT U.S. SOLO SUCCESSES IN THE MIDDLE EAST,
PARTICULARLY THE SECRETARY'S "PERSONAL ACTIVITY." HE
SAID THERE WAS A FEELING THE SECRETARY WAS SAYING ONE
THING BUT DOING ANOTHER. THIS PERSONAL APPROACH WAS
"RISKY," AND U.S. SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT GROMYKO'S
VISITS TO SYRIA HAD BEEN IMPORTANT TO THE SUCCESS OF
SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT. (COMMENT: IN INTERESTING
CONTRAST, USA INSTITUTE ME EXPERT K. KISLOV SAID IN
SAME CONVERSATION THAT SECRETARY'S ROLE HAD BEEN
SUCCESSFUL AND NECESSARY FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF
DISENGAGEMENT.) FOR THE FUTURE BELYAYEV
THOUGHT SOVIET-U.S. COOPERATION WOULD BE ESSENTIAL.

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5. GENEVA CONFERENCE. BELYAYEV INDICATED SOVIETS
ARE IN NO HURRY TO RECONVENE GENEVA. PYRLIN, IN
PRESENCE OF EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATS, SAID IT WOULD MEETO
ONLY AFTER THE ARAB SUMMIT IN SEPTEMBER, A CON-
CLUSION SHARED BY BELYAYEV. BELYAYEV SHOWED CON-
SIDERABLEINTEREST IN HOW THE U.S. WOULD APPROACH THE
MEPC. HE SEEMED TO ACCEPT AS REALISTIC EMBOFF'S VIEW
THAT A STEP-BY -STEP APPROACH WOULD BE ONLY ARRANGEMENT

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

WITH CHANCE FOR SUCCESS.

6. SOVIET-ISRAELI RELATIONS. BELYAYEV SAW LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT MOSCOW WOULD RESUME RELATIONS SOON. HE APPEARED TO RULE OUT RESUMPTION BEFORE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE RECONVENED. HE THOUGHT, NEVERTHELESS, THE BREZHNEV JUNE 14 STATEMENT REGARDING THE USSR'S INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH ALL STATES IN THE ME WAS AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT. BREZHNEV'S WORDS MEANT THE USSR WANTED BETTER RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. HOWEVER, THE TIMING OF ANY RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC TIES WOULD DEPEND ON PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE.

7. PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. BELYAYEV SAID PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WAS STILL EXTREMELY COMPLEX. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THE PALESTINIANS WERE BECOMING MORE REALISTIC. THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS HAD STRENGTHENED ARAFAT'S POSITION. BOTH BELYAYEV AND PYRLIN CONFIRMED THAT ARAFTA WOULD GO TO GENEVA. BUT PYRLIN EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD BE ABLE TO AGREE ON A COMMON LINE. ARAFAT WOULD BE VISITING MOSCOW IN THE SUMMER TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS (UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AFRTO-ASIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE AS BEFORE, ACCORDING TO PYRLIN). PYRLIN ASSERTED THERE IS NO SOVIET INTENTION TO PERMIT A PERMANENT PLO OFFICE TO OPEN IN MOSCOW.

8. BELYAYEV SHOWED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE WEST BANK PALESTINIANS. HE ASKED EMBOFFS' VIEWS ON POSSIBLE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND WEST BANK, SPECIFICALLY WONDERING WHETHER SOME KIND OF DEFERATION MIGHT EMERGE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANT ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN THE WEST BANK AND ISRAEL.
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BELYAYEV SAID A MAJOR UNKNOWN IN THIS WHOLE MATTER IS THE INTERESTS AND VIES OF THE WEST BANK PALESTINIANS. HE THOUGHT ISRAEL WAS IN A POSITION TO "CONTROL" THIS FACTOR, AND HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT.

9. SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. BELYAYEV SEEMED UN-CONCERNED AT SOVIET-INSPIRED POSTPONEMENT OF THE FAHMY VISIT. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FAHMY WOULD COME LATER, PROBABLY IN OCTOBER. THIS TIMING WOULD MAKE SENSE. THE ARAB SUMMIT WOULD BE OVER, AND ARAB POSITIONS WOULD BE CLEARER. A VISIT AT THIS TIME (JULY), BELYAYEV THOUGHT, WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN VERY USEFUL BECAUSE "WE HAVE NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT NOW." BELYAYEV WAS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE EGYPTIAN VISIT WOULD OCCUR BEFORE THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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CONFERENCE. (EGYPTIAN EMBOFF TELLS US THAT HIS
SIDE HAS NOT ACCEPTED OCTOBER VISIT, BUT HAS ASKED
SOVIETS TO EXPLAIN RATIONALE FOR POSTPONEMENT AND WHY
EARLY OCTOBER WOULD BE BETTER.)
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